

**OPEN MEETING MINUTES**

Name of Governmental Body: Governor's Health Equity Council		Attending: Cassie Frankel, Michelle Robinson, Elizabeth Wikler, Gina Green-Harris, Andrew Walsh, Cecilia Culp, Donna Wong, Elizabeth Valitchka, Fred Ludwig, Gale Johnson, Janel Hines, Jerry Waukau, Karen Timberlake, Lilliann Paine, Maria Barker, MayChee Yang, Patty, Tito Izard, William Parke-Sutherland, Zach Madden, Nadiyah Groves, Lexy Ware, Jasmine Zapata, Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, David Frazer, Laurice Lincoln, Mackenzie, Paula Tran, Vipul Shukla, Mackenzie Gearin, Margarita Northrop, Regina Vidaver, Sandra Brekke, Sam Austin
Date: 11/17/2021	Time Started: 1:02 Time Ended: 3:50	
Location: Zoom		Presiding Officer: Gina Green-Harris

**Minutes**

**1. Welcome, overview of agenda, updates..... 1:00 to 1:10 PM**

Gina Green-Harris welcomed Council members, provided several reminders about upcoming deadlines and where Council members can find information about our work for future reference, and invited attendees to take care of themselves as needed during today’s meeting.

Gina provided an update on the status of the minor recommendations, which currently include all ideations that haven’t been prioritized as major recommendations. Council members should watch for more information from their subcommittee leadership on how to move forward with these minor recommendations.

Gina also directed members of the public to send their comments to the [DHSHealthEquityCouncil@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSHealthEquityCouncil@dhs.wisconsin.gov) inbox.

**2. Review and approve minutes from 9/15/21 and 10/27/21 meetings.....1:10 to 1:15 PM**

At this time, a quorum was not in attendance so this vote was postponed until later in the meeting if possible.

**3. Agency Updates.....1:15 to 1:40 PM**

Fred Ludwig spoke on behalf of Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes and provided an update about recent climate change legislation put forward by Neubauer and Smith (both Democrats in the legislature) based on the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change recommendations. Bills include requiring the Public Service Commission to analyze the social cost of carbon, food waste reduction, energy assistance for low-income families, assisting local governments with climate change planning, increasing urban forestry grants to address urban heat zones, racial impact analysis of everything under the purview of the DNR, and creating a Wisconsin Climate Corps, amongst other topics.

Nadiyah Groves (Director of the Milwaukee Office) and Zach Madden (Legislative Director) spoke on behalf of the Governor’s Office. Zach provided an overview of the redistricting process, the People’s Maps Commission, and the ongoing litigation in state and federal courts. Redistricting happens every 10 years. The People’s Maps Commission consists of 3 retired judges and 9 additional citizens from across the state. The group worked for over a year to draw maps and get input. They produced a set of recommended maps for the Assembly and Senate. The Governor asked the legislature to pass the

maps, but the Legislature did not take these maps up and instead supported Republican-drawn maps. The Governor is expected to veto these maps. This issue will then move forward in the courts.

Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake spoke on behalf of the Department of Health Services (DHS). Cassie Frankel, the GHEC project manager, announced that she will be leaving DHS for a position with the new Fenwick Institute for Pediatric Health Equity at Boston Children's Hospital managing a NIH grant focused on improving access to care for transgender youth. Her last day will be December 3. Cecie Culp announced that she has accepted a position as the Senior Health Equity Advisor for the Division of Public Health and will remain involved in supporting the Governor's Health Equity Council. She will transition to this new position on Monday, November 22. Her work will focus on advancing health equity within the workplace and serving as a resource to the public. Michelle Robinson, vice chair of the Council, has also joined the Department as the Director of the new Office of Health Equity. Michelle talked about her "north star" vision for the new Office, plans for internal and external stakeholder engagement to further develop this vision and identify gaps and opportunities, and commitment to robust staffing, including rebuilding the Minority Health Program and expanding its capacity to meet its additional statutory duties beyond grant making. Internal equity issues are also a priority. She shared that her first 4 weeks in the role have been a "full immersion experience." Secretary-designee Timberlake also provided a brief overview of the DHS budget process anticipated to kick off in the upcoming months and extending through September 15, 2022 when agency recommendations are due to the Department of Administration and the Governor's Office. DHS will also share budget papers for new initiatives with DOA for consideration for inclusion in the Governor's Budget in early October. The Governor then presents the budget to the legislature for action in February 2023. Secretary-designee Timberlake is excited to incorporate ideas from the GHEC recommendations into the DHS budget process, and have additional dialogue with GHEC members, the Office of Health Equity, and the Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (HEDI) Council to ensure the Department takes an equity-informed approach to budgeting. HEDI and the Office of Health Equity will also offer their own budget recommendations. Secretary-designee Timberlake also thanked those who participated in listening sessions to develop the Wisconsin Environmental Equity Tool, a collaboration between DHS, DNR, and WEDC to build a data visualization tool to identify opportunities to enhance environmental justice.

Elizabeth Valitchka spoke on behalf of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and provided a high-level update on the agency's budget process, anticipated to beginning in the new year. DCF has received three awards from the State Council on Affirmative Action on work they have been doing to build an equitable and inclusive workplace. All divisions use an equity lens to develop their budget recommendations, but the process is not standardized across divisions. The agency is learning from each division what works and what doesn't to identify best approaches to build into the budget process. DCF encourages stakeholders to reach out with ideas and questions as soon as possible to establish a natural working cadence ahead of the budget process. GHEC members can contact Elizabeth Valitchka at [elizabeth.valitchka@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:elizabeth.valitchka@dhs.wisconsin.gov).

Laurice Lincoln spoke on behalf of the Governor's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council. The Council meets 4x/year; the first meeting of the Council took place in February and the November meeting was the last for 2021. The Council has formed 3 subcommittees that are working to learn about state agencies and their charges: 1) data and policy (looking at statute and regulations to identify barriers to homeownership and business development), 2) economic and business development, and 3) community engagement. Subcommittees are creating guiding statements and work plans to help them develop recommendations by February 2022. Work plans will include strategies and activities that will guide them in development of recommendations and will be approved by the full Council. The next meeting will be held February 11, 2022 and GHEC members are welcome to join to learn more. Tito Izard requested written information on each of the Council's subcommittees. Laurice also shared about the state summer diversity internship program available for students aged 18 and older and will provide information to GHEC staff to share with the broader Council. To close, Laurice congratulated DHS and DCF on their recent diversity, equity, and inclusion awards. Gale Johnson asked for clarification on the

state summer diversity internship program. Applications will be available as early as December 6, through January 31, for positions beginning at the end of May or beginning of June. Internships are LTE positions that usually extend through the end of August. Dr. Tito Izard asked whether housing could be made available to support students from outside of Madison to relocate for in-person positions. Laurice anticipates that work from home and hybrid positions will be made available in addition to full-time in-person positions. This will be identified on the job descriptions. Dr. Jasmine Zapata asked that additional information on the internship program be shared with the full Council.

After agency updates, the Council took a 2-minute break and reconvened at 2:01pm.

**4. Updates from subcommittees.....1:45 to 2:50 PM**

Michelle Robinson began the discussion with a brief overview of the charge of each subcommittee, a review of the ideation and prioritization phases and processes, and the tentative outline for the full report. The report is expected to be complete by April 2022.

Each subcommittee then presented on the current status of their major recommendations.

Michelle Robinson also presented on behalf of the Framing subcommittee and their work to develop data and health equity narratives. The subcommittee members are currently reviewing and providing feedback on the draft materials. After feedback is incorporated, the Planning Team will review before sharing with the full Council in the next few weeks. The committee is still deliberating as to whether they want to develop any recommendations in addition to their data and equity principles, which outline how data should be used to inform conversations that seek to advance equity. Michelle also expressed great appreciation for Andrew Walsh and Sarah Schuit’s support of this process in their role as facilitators.

Elizabeth Valitchka spoke on behalf of the Programs subcommittee. The committee currently has 4 recommendations they are developing: Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers (CHW) providing services to enrollees of fee-for-service or managed care plans, support for women and infants to improve birth outcomes by extending postpartum medical assistance coverage to a full year, dental access for all of Wisconsin’s children to improve oral health outcomes by funding community dental health care coordinators, and healthcare partnerships & funding to diversify the workforce.

Vipul Shukla and Dr. Jasmine Zapata presented on behalf of the Power subcommittee. The committee held their first listening session yesterday and have had community members regularly attend their subcommittee meetings. The committee is developing 6 recommendations: quality and accessible housing (“there is no place like home”), tuition waiver for Wisconsin American Indian students, transgender safety and empowerment, increase rural access to telehealth services via broadband expansion, enhance maternal mortality review process by funding family interviews, and transitioning GHEC to state statute body. Community members have raised concerns about the political feasibility of using legislative action to transition GHEC to a state statute body.

Gale Johnson presented on behalf of the Policy subcommittee. They will be meeting with the Division of Medicaid Services to inform their proposals related to Medicaid. Maria Barker also presented on her recommendation to make FPOS (Family Planning Only Services) available to undocumented populations and the listening session she held with promotores de salud who work with the undocumented population (both Latinx and other undocumented communities). Other recommendations related to access to health care include expanding Medicaid programs and ensuring more immigrants can receive urgent health care by expanding emergency services under BadgerCare. William Parke-Sutherland presented on two recommendations related to economic security: raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr by 2025 and expanding the state earned income tax credit (EITC) to include adults without dependent children. The subcommittee is also working on a recommendation to create

an Office of Environmental Justice. This effort is being led by the Lt. Gov. A listening session on this recommendation is scheduled for next Tuesday at 1pm.

Dr. Tito Iazard noted that recommendations cover many specific groups (transgender, undocumented, etc.) but a gap of recommendations addressing the African-American and descendent of slavery populations. He finds it interesting that this population rarely benefits from targeted programs, but rather only general approaches, and said that there has never been enough time or capacity for the American descendants of Slavery population since 1964-65 and that’s why disparity gaps for this population persist. Dr. Michelle Robinson pushed back that many recommendations do target the African American population specifically, and that the implementation details of other recommendations would address this population as well. Dr. Jasmine Zapata shared that capacity was a big issue in prioritizing major recommendations for her subcommittee and prevented her from personally championing a recommendation for African-American descendants of slavery. She also shared that in her role with DHS, conversations are ongoing about targeted resources for black birthing people.

Dr. Zapata asked about how opportunities to move recommendations forward in other avenues would impact their inclusion in the report. For example, she is working with the Medicaid team to see if they could provide funding to support family interviews, but it is not guaranteed. Dr. Michelle Robinson asked that the Council is realistic about the environment in which we are writing these recommendations. Recommendations can still be put forth even if the work is ongoing. This report is also an opportunity to propose alternative models. William Parke-Sutherland shared that the Policy subcommittee chose to pause on drafting one of their recommendations pending potential federal action to preserve their capacity for other proposals.

William Parke-Sutherland asked to connect with the author of the dental access proposal offline to share some ideas. Elizabeth Valitchka, the lead author of that proposal, shared her contact information.

Gale Johnson mentioned that the biennial budget process provides another opportunity to revisit ideas that the Council has not yet put on the table. Secretary-designee Timberlake responded that the presentations on the major recommendations were what she was hoping that she might hear because they provide clear opportunities for DHS and DCF to take action. The Council can also identify recommendations they hope will be included in the biennial budget process. Secretary-designee Timberlake also shared that the Framing subcommittee can help address Dr. Iazard’s concerns about the lack of targeted recommendations for African-Americans.

Michelle Robinson and Gina Green-Harris encouraged Council members to continue this discussion at subcommittee meetings, which all are welcome to attend.

The Council took a brief break and reconvened at 3:02pm.

**5. State Health Assessment listening session.....2:55 to 3:45 PM**

Gina Green-Harris introduced the State Health Assessment and the DHS State Health Plan Team (Maggie Northrop, Mackenzie Gearin, Susan Uttech, and Regina Vidaver). The State Health Plan Team presented about their methodology for creating a new state health assessment and some of the major themes arising from their conversations with diverse communities throughout the state. Belonging, social connectedness, and cohesion was the number one theme heard across communities. The state health assessment will be used to help reframe the state health improvement plan and its values, principles, key conditions, and priority areas to focus more on upstream policy and system change.

The State Health Plan Team asked the Council to share how the report, process, framing, and content is resonating or not resonating with them and their communities. Jerry Waukau shared that he liked the emphasis on belonging and would like to see identity added, as these concepts are inherently linked, particularly in Native communities. Dr. Tito Izard shared that he agrees with the sentiment, and resists using terms like POC or BIPOC because of this. Regina Vidaver responded that she thinks the first section of the text should address this concern but invited Jerry to read it and provide further feedback if it doesn't.

Michelle Robinson asked how the State Health Improvement Plan intends to address disparities outside of the purview of DHS. Maggie Northrop responded that the goal of the State Health Assessment is to assess and describe, but that sustainable partnerships are key to address the social, economic, and environmental conditions shaping health conditions. Mackenzie Gearin added that including metrics outside of the purview of DHS helps to illustrate that other conditions impact health and invite other partners to the table to improve population health.

Shiva Bidar-Sielaff asked how health systems' community health needs assessments are used to inform the State Health Assessment. Maggie Northrop noted that it is a bit unwieldy but the team is working to ensure they are learning from local processes and trying to align where possible.

Gina Green-Harris asked the Council how the information from the State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan can be leveraged to support our work. Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake suggested that the State Health Plan Team's slides be shared with GHEC members for additional consideration of opportunities for alignment with content and process. The slide deck will be shared with Council members after the meeting. Michelle Robinson reminded Council members that the SHA is an excellent resource for data to back GHEC recommendations.

Maggie Northrop shared that the State Health Assessment public input survey will remain open until November 19 or later. Survey link: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/6374193/Wisconsin-State-Health-Assessment>. Council members can also send feedback directly to the team; email addresses will be shared with full Council in follow up email.

- 8. Adjourn.....3:55 to 4:00 PM

Shiva moved to adjourn; Dr. Zapata seconded.

Prepared by: Cassie Frankel on 11/17/2021.

These minutes are in draft form. They will be presented for approval by the governmental body on:

4/27/2022